

Look Out For Loaded Dice at Disarmament Conference, Is Edison's Warning

Like Pauper Watching Man In Limousine, Japs Want Pacific Coast

Wizard Declares All the World Should See to It That Nipponese Desist From Taking Territory Needed By Other People.

(Continued from First Page.)

rich, comparable with that of the rich man in the midst of poor men. "As we sit here with everything under the heavens that any reasonable nation could ask for it will be well for us to take thought of the fact that none other of the nations is so situated. If Germany desires Silesia, it is but natural; it may not be high-minded and unselfish; nations never are high-minded and unselfish—we never have been, really. Germany is thinking about Germany. We must all endeavor to promote justice, but we must not expect anybody in a lawsuit to see the other fellow's claims as clearly as he sees his own.

"To me it seems quite natural that Japan should want America's Pacific Coast. That doesn't mean that she should have it, or that any conceivable set of circumstances might arise which, to my mind, would excuse her in an effort to acquire it. But it is natural that the pauper, looking at the prosperous man in his limousine, should want to own that car—and the rich man's fur coat as well, perhaps.

"That England should want desperately to hang on to everything she had before the war, and everything she got through her war effort, is as natural as sunset.

"CAN'T STOP SECRECY"

"Ought she to keep it? I don't know. It's not my job to know. But this is a human world. Some international conferences have failed because they tried to violate the laws of human nature. One of the chief of these is looking out for Number One.

"Here is a good thing to remember: We've got to keep as sane about peace as we should keep about war."

I asked Mr. Edison about the various suggestions that have been made with regard to plans for making the approaching conference open and above board, speaking particularly of the thought in many minds that open sessions might remove the dangers of secret diplomacy.

"No," said Mr. Edison. "Whether or not the sessions shall be open, secret diplomacy will run riot down in Washington as the conference progresses. It would be as utterly unreasonable to expect actual frankness as it would be to expect actual unselfishness at such a meeting. Secret dealing cannot be prevented. I am not certain that it ought to be. It would require a group of supermen as delegates—or of inefficient citizens of the represented nations.

PRIVATE UNDERSTANDINGS

"We must be cautious in our judgment of these things. Acceptance of the responsibilities of government representation may of necessity transform an honest man into the opposite. There will be some of that sort of thing upon our own part if we come out of the conference without loss of prestige and advantage. Don't forget that this world is just as human now as when the apple episode occurred in Eden.

"The competent representative of any government is likely to think, and may be justified in thinking, when the interests of the country sending him are threatened, that the end justifies the means.

"The war did not reveal the inner secrets of the governments. All sorts of strictly private understandings now exist affecting practically every portion of the world, no matter how much this may be denied by diplomats.

WARNS OF LOADED DICE

"Denial is the diplomat's chief stock in trade. The delegates at Washington will have their pockets full of loaded dice. There will be every sort of underground work there, as there was at Paris, as there must be at any meeting of this sort. It would be silly to expect otherwise."

I asked Mr. Edison for his opinion on the disputed question of an open conference.

"I believe," said he, "that the sessions of the conference should be secret, and that a digest of what occurs, each day, should be given out by the American Government and by no other source of information. We must be courteous and play the game with our conferees.

"Entirely wrong impressions may arise out of too free discussion of things which have not been accomplished, but are being worked for. I know that that is true in business. I know it must be true at meetings of this sort which will occur in Washington.

"America must not expect too much of this conference. Its agreements will be dependent upon circumstances. The people must realize this or they will meet with disappointments. The delegates will be the servants of their governments. Their agreements will be like those of trade representatives who meet and solemnly agree to programs and then rush to the telegraph offices to notify their selling agents to cut prices.

"That is why I suggest an agreement with regard to the whole question of disarmament to last not more than five years. Why pretend that we can at this conference bet on something which will last forever when we know well we cannot?"

"I think there would be a real safeguard in the adoption of an inviolable rule that no agreement to last longer than five years should be reached.

"The condition of the world is such that an agreement made now to last five years only is likely to be really observed.

"The whole world is hard up. Knowing that this condition will

with interest everything that has been printed about Japan's strange position and alleged belligerent intent.

"There is a way whereby such thoughts may be put out of her head. They grow there because she must have land for her increasing population. Whether or not we like the Japanese we must admit that.

"Japan must have a place for her surplus population, but she must get it by purchase, not by secret diplomacy or conquest. The problem of the Asiatic is most difficult. Sanitation preserves from periodical decimation by recurrent plagues populations which without it increased so speedily that nothing save such plagues kept it down to a proportion which could get support from off the land on which it lived.

"I, personally, am certain that to help Japan get new and generously large areas on which to live would be far cheaper than to build warships with which to fight her. I believe the other nations should assist her to get land, which, by giving up of their own any portion which they hold materially valuable or sentimentally holy, but by helping her to get some territory which is not in use at present.

"Russia has great areas unreasonably distant from her center of government which might be given to the Japanese. What right has she to stand above them, growling, if anybody dares approach? She has done nothing to develop them; her present plight is one of the most awful spectacles that the world ever has known. She cannot and never could manage what she has.

SHOULD CHECK JAPAN

"There should be no Japanese conquests of Russian territory, but Japan might purchase some of it, giving in payment bonds which all the other powers could well afford to guarantee. In fact the other nations could afford to take up some of them, actually helping Japan to make payments.

"All the world should see to it that Japan desists from her endeavors to take territory already fully used and needed by any other people. Undoubtedly she should get out of Shantung, and if she hesitates about it her departure should be speeded by the balance of the world.

"But, also, Britain should get out of Hongkong. Portugal should get out of the small territory which she holds. France should get out of Cochinchina and so on. A rule should be a rule. China should be let alone, not only by Japan, but by everybody else.

"But we must not forget that as the thing stands, today, it is not the government of Japan which is making her aggressive, it is her birth rate. She has got to have an outlet. If the conference at Washington, and the government of the world, including the United States, will realize this; if the people and the government of Japan will stop to think that warfare is the costliest way of buying territory, and begin to think of other means whereby it might be got, that problem may be solved.

"Japan's problem is commercial, not more political than mine when I

need to build an addition to my factory.

"What do I do when I am too crowded on the land I have? I go and buy a piece. All right, Japan can go and buy a piece of land which some one else can spare—and all the balance of the world should help her do it, just as the banks help me when I am forced to get new sites.

BAR AMERICAS TO JAPS

"Reason must be followed in this matter as in others. Neither we nor others must be asked to hospitably invite the Japanese to room with us. There is an innate prejudice against mixing races, and doubtless it has firm foundation in some wise, entirely beneficial law.

"California will not consent to an inpouring of the Japanese and you and I can't blame her. But if Japan should issue a couple of billion dollars' worth of bonds guaranteed under safeguards by the other nations of the world, she might buy land of China or of Russia at fair prices.

"The Koreans, even (they certainly have been unhappy where they are since first Japan got after them) might be hired to go elsewhere if a good place were found for them, near other people of their own or similar characteristics.

"It is the judgment of the world's practical men that the Japanese would do far better with the Korean territory than Koreans ever have.

"But it cannot be too emphatically stated that our own, or the Canadian, or the Mexican or South American Pacific Coasts must not be invaded by Japanese populations. Race antagonisms involving actual color are more fundamental and impossible to appease than any European quarrel could be.

"Commerce and not war must solve humanity's problems in the future. If the people of the North had paid the South to free its slaves, letting payments run through a long period, say, of fifty years, it would have been far cheaper than the civil war.

COMMERCIAL METHODS

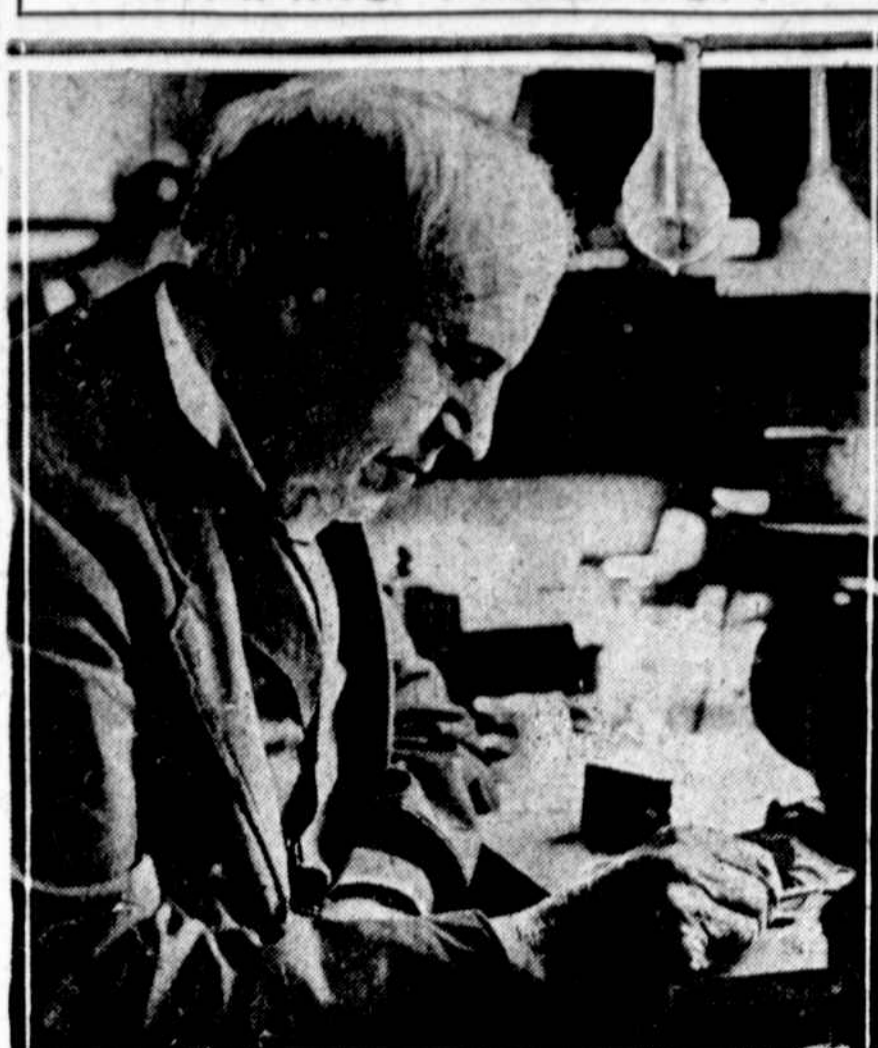
"In the long run rational commercial methods would make international readjustments infinitely cheaper than military methods ever have made them.

"We, of the United States, must not get the notion that we are the world's model. I notice that the balance of the world is not hysterical in its admiring friendship for us. Below us, down in South America, we do not find the people or the governments thrill with love for Uncle Sam.

"We have done some fine things, but not very many. Our repayment of the Boxer indemnity did not leave us free of all suspicion there in Asia, did it? Our treatment of the Filipinos, though I think we have tried to be fair in it, and that we have infinitely helped the Filipino people, does not satisfy all of them. Some clamor for political independence of us.

"Our return of Cuba to the Cubans has not, I think, been criticized. But no Anglo-Saxon mind can understand the Latin, much less the Oriental mind, and prob-

WARNS AMERICA



Thomas A. Edison, famous inventor, who doesn't look for much to come out of the armament conference. All the delegates will carry loaded dice, he warns.

ably this rule always will maintain.

"Humanity's case is not a hopeless one. We have learned much. England did wonderfully when, after she had fought and whipped the Boers, she gave them a dominion government, to all intents and purposes independent of the victors. It is that spirit which has made old England great and the Irish situation by no means is disproof of it.

"Britain frees all countries as soon as they are hers, and thereby fathers strength in them. British statesmen (speaking generally) have realized that in all men there is a streak of good.

"Sassoon, the Oriental banker, many times a victim of robbers in the deserts, hired the desert tribes, themselves, to transport across their lands the money which he wished to send. They transported it, defended it, delivered it without a farthing's loss. If he had not hired them they surely would have robbed him. Trust a man and often he will help you when, if you distrust him—well, heaven alone can help you!

"Our tremendous resources, ma-

terial and other, make us far less desperately interested in the problems of disarmament than certain other nations must be. At the Limitations of Armament Conference we should make a point of one thing, and that is to be more carefully each request that France makes of us and the world. She is in a bad position and always must be unless something more is done to help her achieve safety.

"Disarmament may seem a very simple thing to us, but to France it is not simple. She (and even I) can imagine many very dreadful things which might occur to her if she did not keep herself protected in some way; her worries are quite justified.

GERMANY HATES FRANCE

For the moment it is true, of course, that she is safe enough, because of Germany's financial prostration and general demoralization. But Germany's prostration, we all know, will not last long.

"What then? France asks, and her question is quite justified. We of the United States, must not for-

get it. We contemplate the Germans with fear, because we do not have to live with them.

"The recent statement of Colonel Gibbs, explorer of European plague spots for the New York Health Board, who has just returned from Poland, and, incidentally, from Germany, that Germany feels pleasantly disposed toward us, that she is rife from actually hating England, but that she loathes France with all her heart and proposes to wreak a terrible revenge upon her when it shall be a possibility, is something for us to remember. Try to put yourself, for a few minutes, in the place of just an average Frenchman.

"France knows what air raids were and guesses what they may be in the next war.

"The distance from Germany to the French towns are short and nights there are as long as here. Our own experiments of a few weeks ago, when our airmen bombed old ships down in the Chesapeake, showed that now may be done by way of carrying great loads of high explosives, or even a small quantity of a ton of TNT or of gas bombs is within the possibilities of many modern aircraft, and such terrible missiles, loosed when a silent German flier presses a small lever perhaps two miles in the air above sleeping, populous French cities, are what keep France on edge.

ENFORCING REDUCTION

"Suppose the plane drops on a sleeping city gas bombs with a small amount of explosive to spread the gas over, say, twenty acres!

"It is very obvious to me that we must be extremely tolerant of all French fears, extremely considerate of all French suggestions, extremely sympathetic with the French position.

"I have spoken about reasonable French worries. Well, even they would be relieved if an agreement covering the next five years were consummated. Germany can't do much in five years any more than Japan—even Britain could not—if the conference adopts agreements that all armament not more than 19 or 15 years advanced in its construction forthwith shall be brought to an end of building.

"I don't know about requiring that ships and material which are further on than that shall be immediately scrapped. Perhaps the pressure to finish will be irresistible. Human nature remains human nature and governments and taxpayers are part of it.

"A further agreement that all governments should throw their secrets and secret places open to inspection by an international commission might be useful, but if anything of this sort is agreed upon we must be careful not to let ourselves be flimflamed.

"I cannot see why such a commission might not have the right at any time to visit any source of armament in any country and see to it that agreements were carried out with honesty and intelligence.

"I have suggested not a thing which is beyond the bounds of reason, not a thing beyond the bounds of immediate possibility. The efforts of a very small percentage of the people of the world are required to put through anything. The business of the world, of every sort, is

done by little groups, not by majorities, and, I think, always will be. Where majority is the rule the small groups guide it, the benefit of the majority power lying in the fact that it is chastening to the small groups to know that they may be easily shorn of their power if they go wrong.

PREPARATION URGED

"Small groups run even democratic countries. More participation in the national government here than elsewhere, but by no means all the people here take part. In Britain, speaking of the United Kingdom, the condition may be much like ours, but look at India and Africa.

"I could put the actual bones of the nations of the world upon the tiny island of Bermuda without crowding it. A lot of room for golf links would be left. It is only a small number that must be brought to see the light. Some way must be found of doing it."

I asked Mr. Edison if he could see any limit to the future possibilities of instruments of war-making.

"I cannot," he replied, emphatically. "High explosives, long range guns, poison gases, wireless communication and wireless direction of ships and aircraft offer limitless possibilities beyond which minds constantly advance. At the present moment I see no way of utilizing atomic energy, but that doesn't mean that it cannot be done.

"Develop all these things as rapidly as possible and let the other fellow know that you have done it. He won't try to fight you then, and if he is doing the same thing you'll look at him from the corner of your eye and step wide when you see him rather than approaching him and swearing at him when your fist is doubled."

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Hermit Lost His Life Seeking Hidden Coin

MAKESHALL, Mich., Nov. 5.—Jeremiah Craig, aged recluse who was burned to death when his shanty was destroyed, lost his life trying to save his money. It is believed he had \$200 hidden in the north corner of the rear room and that he raced through the fire to secure this, succumbing to the heat, fire and smoke just as he reached the point where the money might have been hidden.

As soon as possible neighbors carried the body from the building. Several silver dollars and a number of pennies were found embedded in the flesh on the hip where the pocket-book had burned from the coin.

Wire Fence to Prevent Suicide of State's Deer

LEWISTON, Pa., Nov. 5.—A two-strand wire fence will be stretched along the top of the Red Rock, near Anderson station, to prevent deer from leaping over that precipice to the tracks below, where two fine specimens have been killed in the past year.

The State Game Commission will furnish the wire and Warden Zimmerman will string it among the trees to act as a warning to deer approaching at high speed.

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JAPAN'S NEED FOR LAND

Mr. Edison threw up his hands in an expressive gesture.

"Fifty years," said he. "Good Lord—I don't know enough to speak of four or five years, let alone a time as long as fifty years. The problems are too complicated now and new complications will arise with every twelve months.

"It is sure, for instance, that some congested nations must have more land on which to live. I have read